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ADDRESS

To those who have either *retired*,
or *intend* to leave the TOWN, under the
imaginary Apprehension of the *approach-*
ing Shock of another

EARTHQUAKE:

Being the SUBSTANCE of a

SERMON

Delivered on the last LORD'S-DAY,

The first of this Instant *April*.

By ROGER PICKERING,

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Silver-Street, Lord's-Day Evening Lecturer at *Salters-*
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L O N D O N :

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following SERMON was not intended for the Press till Yesterday Morning, the Morning after it was delivered. The Expedition necessary to be made for its Appearance on Thursday next, the Day that some Peoples Apprehensions have unaccountably fix'd upon for another EARTHQUAKE, and those of others on the 8th Instant, prevents my taking the Care, I should otherwise have done, of presenting it more correct to the Public. The Reader will therefore please to give that Indulgence, which himself would expect as an Author in the same Circumstances.

April 3,
1750.

R. PICKERING.





PSALM CXXXIX. 7, 9, 10.

*Whither shall I go from thy Spirit ?
or whither shall I flee from thy
Presence ? If I take the Wings of
the Morning, and dwell in the ut-
termost Parts of the Sea : Even
there shall thy Hand lead me, and
thy Right Hand shall hold me.*



THE Purport of the Psalm, from whence these Words are taken, makes it more than probable, that this elegant Composition was occasioned by that Period in the History of *David*, wherein the Enmity of *Saul* was carried to such Extravagance, as to massacre Four-score and five Priests, and the whole City where they resided, for having entertained that unhappy Fugitive a few Hours. *Saul* had long observed the growing Merit of his

Son-in-Law with a jealous Eye, and could hear with no Degree of Temper the universal Applause that was given to his good Qualities and Accomplishments, more especially in the military Science, in which the King would allow no Equal with himself. There are seldom wanting People to fall in with the ruling Passion of their Prince, nor was *David* without those ill Offices, that People of superior Talents and Excellency generally meet with. The Services he had done his Country were represented as so many Methods of insinuating himself into popular † Esteem, and his late Retirement from Court, occasioned by the King's repeated Attempts against his Life, was construed into a premeditated Design of engaging, without Observation, a Party against the Crown and Life of his Sovereign. Jealousy is too violent a Passion to wait for Evidence and Proof; and *Saul*, credulous of every Thing that agreed with his present Disposition, gave Loose to his Resentment; and, after the Massacre above-mentioned, determined to leave no Part of his Dominions unsearch'd, till he had avenged himself on this suspected Traitor and Parricide.

* *David*, whatever his Expectation of the *Hebrew* Crown's reverting to him might be,

† Compare 1 *Sam.* xxii. 8. with Chap. xxiv. 9, &c.

* Chap. xxiv. 10, &c.

appears to have taken no Step that could give the least Colour to so dishonourable a Charge. When therefore, by the Intelligence with which he was regularly supplied by *Jonathan*, his incomparable Friend and Brother, he came acquainted with the Lights in which he had been represented, it is easy to suppose him under those Emotions that conscious Innocence and Honour would feel upon the Occasion ; and having now no sympathizing *Jonathan* to whom to impart his Soul, his Piety directed him to lay it open to the great Searcher of Hearts and ever-present Friend.

Such an Appeal then, the Appeal of conscious Innocence, does the Psalm before us appear to be : And that Part of it that falls under our immediate Consideration, seems at once to contain an Acknowledgment, that no Distance could separate him, no Velocity remove him, from the Divine Vengeance, if guilty of the Charge against him ; nor from the Protection of Omnipotence, if innocent.

I judge the Spirit and Elegance of the whole Psalm to be too conspicuous to have escaped your Notice ; but there is a Beauty in *David's* expressing the Impossibility of fleeing from the Presence of God, by the more rapid Degree of Velocity, under the Idea of *taking the Wings of the Morning*, which, as it is not so obvious, we cannot avoid taking Notice of.

It

It is concluded, from Observations on the Eclipses of the Satellites of *Jupiter*, that Light is transmitted from the Sun to the Earth, thro' a Space, adjudged from other Observations, of 75,600,000 of Miles, in about $7\frac{1}{2}$ Minutes, which is, nearly, with the Velocity of 10,000,000 of Miles in a Minute. Now the greatest Circumference of the Earth is but 21,600 Miles; the Half of which, which the *Psalmist* expresses by *the utmost Part of the Sea*, is 10,800 Miles; so that the 1000th Part of a Minute would have carried *David*, had he took *the Wings of the Morning*, i. e. moved with the same Velocity as Light, to *the uttermost Parts of the Sea*, i. e. to that Point of the Globe directly opposite to him.

Is it in the Power of human Thought to form an Image so applicable to the Occasion!

The Doctrine, then, resulting from the Passage before us, is,

That no Distance can separate us from the Divine Presence, no Velocity convey us from the Divine Spirit: The Impenitent have no Hope of escaping his Vengeance, the Christian no Fear of losing his Protection.

Whither, then, ye gay unthinking Croud, that have surfeited upon the Favours of the Almighty; that have profaned his Sabbaths by those painted Amusements, which, even

on common Days, scarcely deserve to be called innocent ; that have, many of you, taken his Sacred Name not only in vain, but to the worst of Purposes ; that have laugh'd at his Power, and despised his Mercy ; whether, struck with the late awful Motions of the Almighty, *will ye go from his Spirit, or whither will ye flee from his Presence ?* Has not the Conscious Seat of your Excesses, which, tho' providentially constituted for the Recovery of your Health, you have most ungratefully converted into the annual Center of your Extravagancies ? Has not that very Spot, to which so many of you are hastening, as to an *Asylum* from the Danger, which your own Guilt, more than any other apparent Reason, leads you to think still lurking under this great *Metropolis* ? Has not this your *Asylum* itself felt the Power of him, *whose is the World and the Fulness thereof ?* Why flee you from the Wrath that, by Flight, ye cannot escape, and refuse the Mercy that a suitable Submission would enable you to receive ?

But wherefore faints the *Christian's* Heart ! Why admits it a Fear unworthy of him that has the LORD OF NATURE for his Friend ! Why trembles he at the Power that is engaged for his Support, or dreads the Vengeance that his REDEEMER has appeased ! Does not * *God compass thy Path and thy lying*

* Psalm cxxxix.

down,

down, is not he acquainted with all thy Ways? Through what Danger cannot his Hand lead thee, or in what Distress his Right Hand hold thee? Can the Darkneſs hide thee from his Care, and, when thou wakeſt, are not thou ſtill with him? † Fear not, then, the Terror by Night, nor the Deſtruction that waſteth by Noon-day. A Thouſand may fall at thy Side, and ten Thouſand at thy Right Hand, and yet the Evil not come nigh thee. Becauſe thou haſt made the Lord, even the moſt High, thy Habitation; there ſhall no real Evil befall thee; neither ſhall any vindictive Plague come nigh thy Dwelling.

Such is the Subject to which we now would direct your Thoughts, by

- I. Producing ſome Arguments, that, to us, appear as Proof of the UNIVERSALITY of the DIVINE PRESENCE and AGENCY;

And then,

- II. Suggesting the CONVICTIONS that, in our Opinion, ariſe from ſuch a Conſideration.

Our firſt Endeavours, then, are to produce ſome Arguments to prove the UNIVERSALITY of the DIVINE PRESENCE and AGENCY: A Point, methinks, ſo ſelf-evident, that it would be an Affront to the common Reaſon

of Mankind to defend it in Form, were not that Faculty capable of making the vilest Submissions to Vice, and the Prejudices under which Vice lays the Mind. To support these, we dispute against Reason, and argue against Demonstration. In vain does Nature every Moment exhibit its innumerable Acknowledgments of the constant AGENCY and SUPERINTENDANCE of God : The Conviction is evaded by a partial Compliance with it : " God is allowed to exist ; Creation " is granted him ; the Laws of Nature are " acknowledged to take their Rise from his " Determination : But, Creation once finish'd, " the Laws of Nature once determined, (we " find it asserted that) 'tis neither necessary nor " fit for God to interpose". Nature, then, thus left to follow its constant, undirected Course, except under that Direction which results from its primary Laws, all the physical Evils of Life are contingent Effects of the casual Continuations of natural Causes. Comfortable Hypothesis ! wherein Danger and Death surround us in all Directions, and no Hand more friendly, more intelligent to divert them than that of Chance ! Indisputable Ethics ! wherein God has laid himself under the Obligation to be equally indifferent to the Blasphemy of his Enemies, and the Prayers of his People !

From these Principles, which with some pass for establish'd Axioms, the following Corollaries are drawn.

B

That

That SECONDARY CAUSES are not under the Direction of the FIRST.

That the LORD OF NATURE CANNOT apply Powers of his own Creation, either in JUDGMENT for Sin, or REMONSTRANCE against it.

Consequently,

That the two late Concussions of this proud *Metropolis* need give no Interruption to the usual Engagements of People of Spirit and Freedom of Mind.

That the Removal of a few Miles upon the Surface of one and the same Tract of Land, whose interior Construction, in which the natural Causes of *Earthquakes* are lodged, is not known, is a certain Security both from GOD and NATURE.

What can be expected, what actually do we find, to be the Consequence of giving into Principles and Sentiments of this Nature, but abandoned Morals and profligate Lives? To give a Loose to our Passions is to follow Nature; to worship God, a Want of Taste for politer Employment; to fear him, the Effect of Ignorance and an abject Mind! what then, are we to look for from the Manhood of those Youth, who, under the Directions of such Parents, throw aside the Bible for the Mysteries of the Card-Table, and to whom the Name of a certain Instructor in this *Sunday* Diversion, is more familiar than that of the REDEEMER of MEN!

Excuse

Excuse me, if a Warmth, justifiable in this Place at least, has somewhat retarded the Pursuit of the Method we had engaged to proceed in.

The Arguments we would offer in Opposition to these Principles, we shall term *Abstract* and *Direct*. By *abstract* Arguments, we mean such as are founded upon the *Ideal Knowledge* we have of God; by *direct*, those that arise from the *visible Operations* of Nature.

Among others that might be produced of the former Kind, we offer the following to your Consideration.

First,

The AUTHOR of those Materials from which the *System of the Universe* was at first formed, cannot be supposed to be either *excluded from*, or *confined to* that *Space* which he *voluntarily* and *intelligently assigned* for that *System* to fill up, or *limited* in his *future Agency* and *Operations* by those *Powers* which HIMSELF *communicated* to *inanimate* and *animated Matter*.

Consequently, His *Presence* must be *Universal*, and His *Agency* by *Natural Causes*, and His *Application* of their *Effects*, *Discretional*.

Secondly,

The CREATOR of the *System of the Universe* must *continually supervise* and *maintain* it, under the *Alterations*, which, in the Nature of Things, frequently may be, and

in Fact absolutely *are made* in it. But, such a *Supervisal* and *Maintenance* cannot be supposed unless His *Presence* be *universal*, and His *Agency* and *Interposition* *constant* and *universal* also.

It may here be, possibly, urged, that,
 “ To suppose the Works of God capable
 “ of such *Alterations* as require his *constant*
 “ *Supervisal* and *Care*, is a *Reflection* upon
 “ his *Wisdom* or *Power* in their *primitive*
 “ *Constitution*. No more so, than it is to
 suppose, (what is in fact beyond Supposition)
 that there is any such Thing as *Physical*
Evil. All the Works of God are *perfect*
 in their *Kind*, and *completed* for the *Ends*
 for which he made them. Man is no less
 a perfect Being as Man, though he owes
 his Subsistence to what is *mediately* only in
 his Power to provide, and though subject
 to *Pain*, *Sickness* and *Death*. The Earth
 is no less a Work of God, *perfect* in its
Kind, though its Surface be liable to be
convulsed, *rent* and *absorbed* by *Earthquakes*,
 occasioned by inflammable Vapours lodged
 within its interior Caverns. The *component*
Principles of *Matter*, when in a certain
Kind of *Contact* with each other, *must*,
 without a *superior Interposition and Direction*,
always produce such Effects, the Conse-
 quences of which have often been sufficient
 to change the *Constitution* of our *Globe*.
 The Objectors will not, I suppose, allow
 me to urge the *Alterations* that might have
 been

been occasioned, without a *Divine Interposition*, by the *Deluge*, though I think we are far from having the Evidence to its Credibility from *Scripture* only. They will permit me however to ask whether the intestine Convulsions the *Earth* has suffered at various Times, may not, from their other Effects, be supposed sufficiently violent to have affected its *diurnal Rotation*, or even to have *sensibly altered* in that *Pensile Body* the *Obliquity* of its *Sphere*? Whether, at least, the vast *Changes* these occasioned upon its *Surface*, among which the *Separation* of some of our present *Islands* from the *Continent* may, probably, be reckoned, must not have *altered* the *relative Gravity* of some of its Parts? What then *could* have maintained the *Equilibrium* necessary to retain it within the *Path* of its *annual Orbit*, but the *Supervisal* and *Agency* of its INTELLIGENT CREATOR?

Thirdly,

He that *created* a *Species* of *reasonable Beings*, invested with *moral Powers*, but such as were *capable* of taking a *wrong Direction*, must be supposed to *maintain* a Kind of *moral Government* over them.

But such *moral Government* could not be maintained without His *Presence* to *observe* their *Conduct*, and without His *occasional Application* of *natural Causes* in *Effects* the most *obvious* to their *Senses* and *Conviction*, to *admonish* them of their *Duty*, enforce
His

HIS *Authority*, and *punish* their *Disobedience*.

Thirdly,

HE, that is not only to *determine* but *proportion* also the *Rewards* and *Punishments*, in a *future State*, of *Beings* *responsible* for their *Conduct*, must necessarily be *acquainted* with the *Conduct* of those whose *future Condition* he is to *determine* for *Eternity*; and it would naturally be expected from HIS *Equity* and *Benevolence*, that *He* would give us in our *present Situation* some *apposite* and *convictive Intimations* from *Nature* as well as *Revelation*, of what we are either to *fear*, or *hope* for.

BUT THE JUDGE OF ALL MEN cannot be *acquainted* with the *Conduct* of those whose *Condition* he is to *determine* for *Eternity*, unless HE were *universally present* to *observe* it; nor can there be more *apposite* or *convictive Intimations* in *Nature*, than those that arise from his *Application* of the *ordinary Effects* thereof, *occasionally*, in *Remonstrance* against what he will afterwards more *completely punish*, and in *Encouragement* of that which he will afterwards more *amply reward*.

But we proceed to Arguments of the *direct Kind*, which, in *Hopes* to convince those who allow not the *essential Connection* of *Philosophy* with *Religion*, we shall take from the *sacred Repository* of all useful *Knowledge*; and therefore direct you to the

104th Psalm. After a most masterly and nervous Introduction, the 9th Verse leads us to consider the Presence and Agency of God in supervising the Execution of those Laws he has prescribed to the Waters of the mighty Ocean.

Thou hast set a Bound that they may not pass over : that they TURN NOT AGAIN *to COVER the Earth.*

The Sea, from the sphaerical Form of our World in general, must have also its superficial Globularity too ; yet TURNS IT NOT AGAIN *to COVER the Earth*, tho' that Globular Eminence be increased by the most violent Agitation of its Waters. The Boundary of this ponderous and impetuous Element consists of such minute Particles as, one would think, the repeated Lashes of its Surges would long ago have wash'd away. Should we have conjectured that Sand were a sufficient Barrier against this incessant Invader, or not rather have expected that perpendicular Rocks and Cliffs should universally have been destined to secure us from it ?

But though this universal Law of Nature is our *usual*, it is not our *constant*, our *never interrupted* Defence. Has the Sea never covered vast Tracts of Land, and added them to its Empire ? Not to add, what the 6th Verse of this Psalm, probably, refers to, the *universal Invasion* it was once permitted to make. What then secures us from its
more

more frequent Inroads ; nay, what from a Catastrophe that it once occasioned, but the continual SUPERVISAL and INTERPOSITION of God ?

Verse the 10th leads us to a Consideration of no less Weight than the former.

He sendeth the SPRINGS into the Vallies, which RUN among the HILLS.

The Rises of those great Rivers that diversify and enrich the several Countries they run through, we find on the Sides of Mountains ; Places where, following the *usual Laws* of Nature, we should scarcely have look'd for them. Are the Cisterns that supply these Springs fill'd by the Waters of *Vapours, condensed* on the Sides, or of the *Snow melted* on the Tops of those Mountains ? Neither *Rain* nor *Snow Water* has been found to force its Passage deeper than 16 Inches below the Surface of the Earth. Are they supplied by *Percolation* from the Sea ? What Force than elevates them above the Level of that Element ? Is it by the *Attraction* attributed to *Cohæsion*, as, by wetting gradually the Base of an Heap of Sand, the Moisture is in Time, perceptible at the Top ? The inward Construction of Mountains is but partially, very partially, made up of such *loose Materials*. Does *Rarefaction*, occasioned by some *subterraneous Heat*, send up the *Vapours* of some concealed *Abyss* of Waters, which, at a suitable Height, *condense* into Supplies

Supplies for their *perpetual* Current ? What, then, prevents such *subterraneous Heats* from *inflaming* the *metallic Vapours* it must necessarily meet with, and then, from either pouring out in *Volcanos*, or breaking forth in *Earthquakes* ?

This only, then, we know, that from such *Eminences* our Rivers are supplied, and from such a Situation owe the Force that they receive of working out by their *Gravity* and *Current* a sufficient Channel to convey their Waters to their last grand Recepticle. The rest remains, still, an *Arca-num* in the Hands of the GREAT and UNIVERSAL AGENT.

Verses 14 and 15, supply us with a further Argument.

He causeth the GRASS to grow for the CATTEL, and Herb for the Service of MAN : That he may bring forth FOOD out of the EARTH :

And WINE that maketh GLAD the HEART of MAN, and OYL to make his FACE TO SHINE, and BREAD which STRENGTHENETH MAN'S HEART.

The *Principles* of Earth, chymically investigated, are few and simple, yet from these, under different *Modifications*, arise those innumerable and elegant Varieties of the *vegetable Kingdom*. Hence, *Sapidity* to the Taste, *Odours* to the Smell, unbounded *Entertainment* to the Eye, and inexhaustible *Pleasure* to a *contemplative Mind*. Hence,

C

Food

Food to the Hungry, Refreshment to the Weary, Chearfulness to the Drooping, and Cure to the Diseased. Neither is there *Provision* for the Service of *Man* only ; but *Grass*, adapted to their Constitution, grows also for the *Cattle*. * *These all wait upon God : And they also are filled with Good.*

What has thrown unintelligent Matter into such an, almost, unbounded, but regular, Luxuriancy ? What, from a few Principles, into almost infinite Varieties in *Form, Taste, Odour* and *Qualities* ? It may be said, “ God ; but not by any constant Agency ; “ ’tis the Result of his primary Establishment in Nature.” But why, from the same Principles, has either *India* its particular and specific Products ? Why grows the *Cinnamon* in *Ceylon* only, and refreshes with its genuine Odour no other Spot upon the known World ? “ from God’s original Institution.” Well. But how comes it that not one, the least significant, *Tribe* of *Vegetables*, is either lost, or impaired, for near 6000 Years ; no, nor a single *Species* of any particular *Tribe* ? “ Nature constantly keeps “ up to the original Appointments of God.” What, constantly ? uninterruptedly ? Whence then the *late Season*, hitherto, unknown in our Climate ; by whose accelerated Warmth, equal, on some Days, to that of our moderate Summers, some *Species* of the *Vegetables* of our northern Situation, unused to such violent and premature Agitation of their

* Psalm civ. 27, 28.

Juices, must necessarily suffer in their delicate Constitution ? You must excuse me, if, till this is accounted for by the *constant* and *uninterrupted Operations* of Nature, 'till some other Agent be discovered, I refer it to the UNIVERSAL DIRECTOR of Nature.

Verses 20, 21, to the 25th.

*Thou makest Darknefs and it is NIGHT :
wherein all the BEASTS of the FOREST do
CREEP FORTH.*

*The YOUNG LIONS ROAR after their
PREY, and seek their Meat from God.*

*The SUN ARISETH, they GATHER them-
selves TOGETHER, and LAY THEM DOWN
IN THEIR DENS.*

*MAN GOETH FORTH to his WORK, and
to his Labour until the EVENING.*

What directs the Tyrants of the Forest, to whom Man is no uncommon or difficult Prey, to chuse the Darknefs that conceals the Object of their Pursuit, and avoid the Light that might direct them to it, and leave to Man the secure, uninterrupted, Opportunity of following his Work and Labour until the Evening ? "Instinct". *Instinct* ! Poor Subterfuge of, hitherto, imperfect Philosophy ; by which to express a Property in Brutes, which it is not willing to own itself unable to understand ! Bid a *Palladio* imitate the wreathen Architecture of a common *Chaffinch* : He is baffled. Bid the *rural Architect* imitate the ruder Composition of another Species of his own

Rank of Beings : He knows no Rules, but those by which his own single Species acts. Whence comes it, then, that *Observation* and *Experience* have not taught the Brute Creation to improve the *Instinct*, REASON, call it what you will, that attends them almost from their very Birth ? Why does not the generous Horse, that has so often groan'd under the Severity of his more Brutal Master, exert his Strength, of which he is at the same Time conscious, against the human Tyrant, the Comptroller of his Liberty ? Why does *human Instinct* improve by Observation without Instruction, and with Instruction every Age improves ; and Brutes, superior to Man in some Kinds of Knowledge, make no Advances in their Capacity, tho' Experience has been their Instructor for near 6000 Years ? 'Tis GOD, it must be the UNIVERSALLY PRESENT and CONSTANT AGENT, by whom the several Orders of Beings are restrained within the Limits of HIS original Destination.

Before we conclude this Part of our Subject, let us follow the sacred Philosopher thro' Verses 29, 30.

Thou hidest thy Face, they are troubled ; thou takest away their BREATH, they DIE, and RETURN to their DUST.

Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are CREATED : and thou RENEWEST the Face of the Earth.

Does the Forest pour in its superior Savage

vage Numbers upon Man ; or has Man by his Art and Industry depopulated the Forest of its fierce Inhabitants ? Has the Luxury and Gluttony of Man so diminish'd the Domestic Breed, but that it still offers itself in more than Plenty to his wanton and fantastic Appetite ? Why produce the Brutal Enemies of Man so few Successors to the Enmity of their Parents ? and why is the Prolification of his Domestic Servants more than sufficient, but not *injuriously* more than sufficient, to answer his various Occasions ? Is this *Instinct* also ? Does the *Lion*, think ye, determine the precise Number of his Offspring ? or does the *Ram* calculate what the Consumption of his Master's Table requires ? Does the Human Parent call forth a Son or a Daughter, as his Inclination or the Interests of his Family require ? And yet, view the weekly Calculations of this *Metropolis*, view those of others ; nor *Tempests*, nor *Earthquakes*, nor *Consumptions*, nor *Fevers*, nor *Convulsions*, that sweep off the larger Part of the Infancy of the Human Species, prevent, but that BRITAIN has still her Soldiers to defend, and her Sailors to transport her Wealth over all the Globe.

O LORD, * *how manifold are thy Works ! in Wisdom hast thou made them all : The Earth is full of thy Riches.* † KNOWN unto thee are ALL thy WORKS from the BEGINNING of the World.

* Verse 24.

† Acts xv. 18.

And

And now, were we, in Contemplation, to *ascend up into Heaven*, Consideration would teach us that *the Heavens* are not only † *the Work of His Fingers*, and that HE hath *ordained the Moon and the Stars*, but that HE || also UPHOLDETH *all Things by the Word of his Power*. We must now, however, enter upon

The Second Part

Of our Engagement : Which was to suggest such Convictions as arise from the foregoing Considerations. Let me now be allowed to ask whether the *Divine Presence* with, and *Influence* upon the lowest *Reptile*, nay, over *inanimate Matter*, being conspicuous, *rational Beings*, are not also under the *constant Government and Influence* of God ? How comes it that Vice, supported by Power, has not, long ago, ruin'd all social Order and Harmony ? I beseech those, who suppose that *natural Causes* ever take Place without *moral Influences*, to look back into History, prophane History if they please, and carefully to observe the Periods of the several Empires and Monarchies of the Earth. When fell *Affyria* the Extensive, *Babylon* the Great, *Egypt* the Learned, *Greece* the Warlike, and *Rome* the Polite, but when public, barefac'd, uncontroll'd *Licentiousness*, had made them intollerable by the MORAL GOVERNOR of the World ? I beseech such to take an unprejudiced

† Psalm viii. 3.

|| Heb. i. 3.

Review of the past and present State of the *Hebrew Nation*; a Nation once eminent in the *East*, once supposed a Nation *distinguish'd by Heaven*; a Nation still — but, without a Country. Was not their present Circumstances *foretold* when there was no probable Prospect of such an Event? Were not their present Circumstances foretold, as the Consequence of crucifying *the Lord of Life*, whose *Blood* the *Deicides* of that Day took upon themselves and their Children? Was *Daniel*, upwards of 600 Years before the Event, silent upon this Subject, or did *Assyria*, *Babylon*, *Egypt* or *Greece* fall, without specific *Prediction*, long before their respective *Catastrophe's*? Whence could these *Predictors* have the *Fore-Knowledge* of what future Facts have verified? From *natural Causes*? Indisputably not: But from HIM, who *declareth the * END from the BEGINNING, and from ANTIENT TIMES the Things that ARE NOT YET DONE, saying, MY Counsel shall stand, and I will do all MY Pleasure.*

If *public Punishment*, then, has, upon the Evidence of Facts, kept Pace with *public Vice*, suffer me to ask further, Whether every *Individual* must not be supposed to be under the *moral Government* of God: For what is *public Guilt* but the Aggravation of *private Vices*? The Measure of *public*

* Isaiah xli. 10.

Iniquity is filled up by the several Enormities of *each* criminal *Individual*.

Must not, then, that Eye, that surveys the Actions of every *Community*, observe the Conduct of *each Individual*? Must not that Being, that observes the Conduct of *each Individual*, single out those whose Vices are most *enormous*, the most *numerous*, and the most *pernicious* in their Consequences?

If THOU, then, deserveest to be the Subject of *remunerative, vindictive Justice*, what shall screen thee from it? Is *remunerative, vindictive Justice* local? Or the Eye, that observes the Actions that deserve it, fix'd only to *one Point*? It sees thee here; it surveys the *Northern Greenlander*, the *Southern African*, the *Indian of the East*, and the *Western American*. Wert thou at either of these, or at any other Point of the Globe this Instant, thou wouldst see as much of God *there* as *here*. Their *Vegetation* is conducted as uniformly as ours; their *Animals*, adapted to their *Climates* and *Occasions*; their *Seasons*, periodical; their *Lunations*, regular; their *Heavens*, spangled with Stars; and the *Orb of Day* blessing them as well as us.

There also wilt thou find the awful *Instruments of Divine Vengeance*: With them also the *Thunder* roars, the *Lightening* kills, the *Seas* rage, the *Tempest* overthrows, the *Earth* trembles, and all the *Armament of Heaven*

Heaven waits for the Direction of the LORD
OF NATURE.

Whither, then, canst thou GO from His Spirit, whither canst thou FLEE from His Presence !

How vain then to expect it from a Removal for a few Miles on one and same Tract of Country ! Were natural Causes to act without the *moral Destination* and *Application* of God ; 'till we could see in what Direction the cavernous Repositories of those inflammable Vapours that occasion *Earthquakes*, lie, *Chance* might possibly carry us to the very Spot where Nature was ready for another *Explosion*. Removal in this Case would be no Security.

But admit a further Concussion, confined to those Parts only, wherein the former were felt, were certain ; suppose thy Removal beyond its Limits had secured thee ; yet, are there not with HIM, *to whom belong the Issues from Death*, the Avenues to it ? Does not, every where, the *Consumption* waste by Degrees ; the *Fever* burn up the vital Spirits at a shorter Crisis ; and the *Apoplexy* put a Stop to circulating Life instantaneously ? Canst *thou* daily repair what the *Consumption* daily wastes ? Canst *thou* retard the rapid Pulsations in a *Fever*, or accelerate their Motions in an *Apoplexy* ? A Thousand Causes, invisible to us, act upon the human Body. Death lurks under

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our Feet, hovers over our Heads, and surrounds us in all Directions.

Argue we, therefore, ever so long, the Matter must be reduced to this: These Causes either act under the *intermediating Direction* of God, or they do not; if they do not, HAS THE SINNER MORE SECURITY THAN OTHER MEN? if they do, HAS HE SO MUCH?

No Brethren,

—— *If there be a God,
And that there is, all Nature cries aloud
In all her Works* ——

If there be a God, *Piety* and *Vice* cannot be regarded by him indiscriminately and with equal Indifference; neither can he be supposed to *countenance, favour, and protect* those who defy his Power, abuse his Mercy, and throw off his Authority; or *level his vindictive Instruments* against the Penitent, Humble, and Sincere.

To the *Christian* then, the honest, faithful, unaffected *Christian*, let us now direct the Subject.

First,

If the Eye of God, through all the extensive Space of Creation, surveys every the *minute* Work of his Hands, shall he overlook those whom his OWN SON has rendered worthy of his Regard?

Secondly,

Secondly,

Shall the liberal Hand of the Almighty pour forth its Blessings on the meanest Reptile, the Creature of a Day, insensible of the Being to whom it owes its Existence and Support; and shall he neglect the Heirs of everlasting Life, capacitated to celebrate his benevolent Perfections to Eternity?

* He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him also freely give us all Things? || Behold the Fowls of the Air: They sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into Barns; and yet your heavenly Father feedeth them, are ye not much better than they? Consider the Lillies of the Field how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; yet even Solomon in all his Glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore if God so clothes the Grass of the Field which To-day is, and To-morrow is cast into the Oven, shall he not much more clothe you?---Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these Things.

Thirdly,

Shall that Power, whose Influence and Extent are limited by no Bounds, but those of Equity and Mercy, be inert or languid to those who have committed the Care and Keeping of all Things to it? No, no, † the Eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout

* Rom. viii. 32. || Mat. vii. 26, &c. † 2 Chron. xvi. 9.

the whole Earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them, whose Heart is perfect towards him.

Fourthly,

Shall *Fire and Tempest, Storms and Earthquakes, Pestilence and Famine*, and all the baneful Train of human Maladies, that act by *no Power*, or according to any *Laws*, but those they received from the ALMIGHTY; shall these be ever supposed *independant* of God, or *capable* of acting otherwise than by His Direction?

Lastly,

Can the Will of God in *directing* the Powers of Nature to fulfil the Purposes of his *moral Government*, be known; *when and where* it will direct them, by any Method but that of an *immediate Revelation* upon the Occasion? Or, can those Powers of Nature, (supposing them to act without a moral Direction) that lie beyond the Reach of human Observation, be judged of as to their *present Fitness and Condition* to operate, and when and how far they will exert themselves. *Eclipses* may be foretold to the greatest Degree of Exactness, but then there are certain obvious Principles and Rules to go by; but it is as impossible to foretel an EARTHQUAKE, as it is to ascertain what Quarter the Wind shall blow from on
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any given Day of the Year. We must first know the *cavernous Construction* of our Island, and in what *Direction* those Cavities are continued, e'er we can determine the *Place* that is to be affected ; we must then be certain that there are at that Time a *sufficient* Quantity of *Vapours* in those Cavities, and that the *Pyrites* is in *Quantity* and *Quality* actually *ready* and *fit* to ignite those Vapours by its sulphureous Effluvia in Contact with them ; after all this, each Circumstance of which 'tis impossible for us to know, we have to determine the *precise Moment* when the expansive Force of these ignited Vapours shall BRING ON THE DREADFUL SHOCK.

But, if God have any *Influence* over these Properties of Matter, if he maintains a *Direction* of their Powers to *moral Purposes*, who can know *how soon* his *Vengeance* may break out, or who can ascertain *how long* his *Mercy* and *Compassion* may forbear ?

Allow me then, Brethren, in the Words of an Apostle, who had Occasion to remonstrate against a *Pannic* similar to the present, but arising from a different Occasion, * *to beseech you that ye be not shaken in Mind or troubled, neither by pretended Spirit, nor by Word, nor by Letter, as that another Earthquake were infallibly at Hand. Let no Man deceive you by any Means.* GOD is at the

* 2 Theff. ii. 1, 2, 3.

Head of Nature ; and who knoweth in this Respect, the Mind of the Lord ? Who can take upon him to be his Counsellor ?

I adjure you, by the *Interest* of that *Gospel* you profess, by the *Credit* of that *Faith* on which you rest your Souls, that, with humble Hearts, but with *Christian Confidence*, in your respective Stations on the Spot where Providence has placed you, ye wait the WILL OF GOD ; *least* the Scoffers at the POWER OF GODLINESS rejoice, and the impious Deniers of a PROVIDENCE triumph.

† *Be still, and know that God is our Refuge and Strength, a very present Help in Trouble. Let us not therefore fear though the Earth be removed, and though the Mountains be carried into the Midst of the Sea.*

* *For Thou, Lord, wilt bless the Righteous, with Favour wilt thou compass him as with a Shield.*

† Psalm xlv.

* Psalm v. 12.



F I N I S.

